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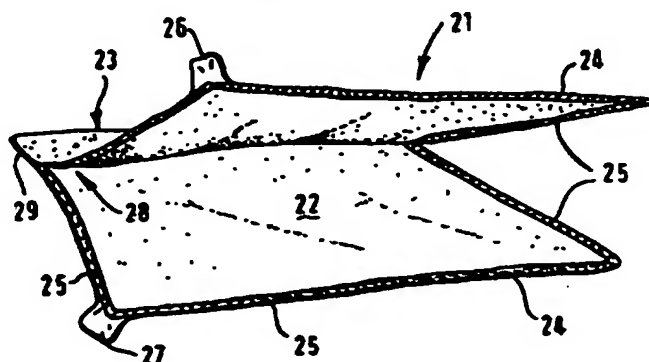
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(54) Abstract Title  
Duvet cover

(57) A duvet cover comprises superposed top and bottom panels 21 and 22 of substantially-coincident outline, both of which share a common peripheral boundary 23 along which the respective panels are joined. The other coincident peripheral boundaries 25 are substantially non-integrated, but instead each are respectively provided with one part of a two-part hook-and-loop closure strip 24, such that they may be detachably secured to each other. The panels (21, 22) may be provided with separation-facilitating tabs (26, 27).

FIG.3



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FIG.1

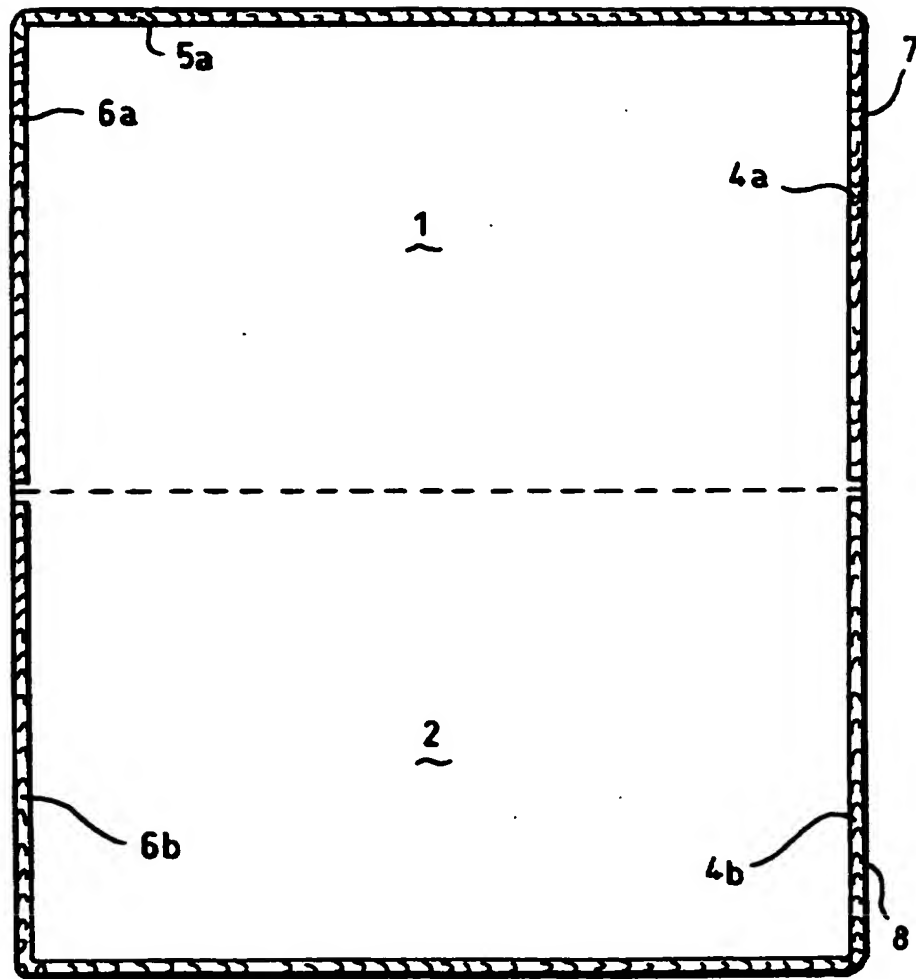
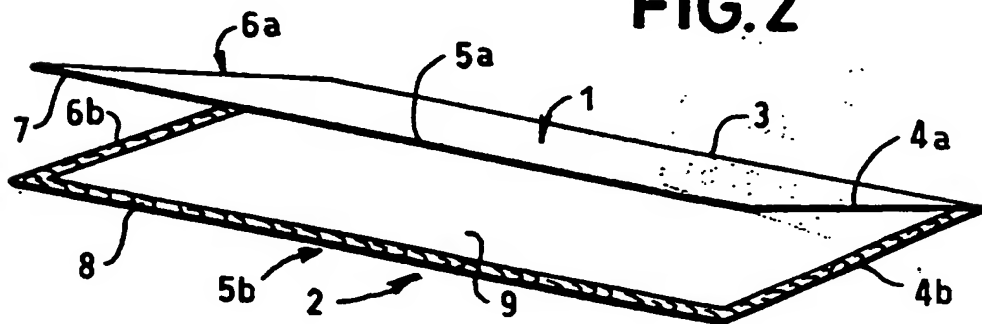


FIG.2



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FIG.3

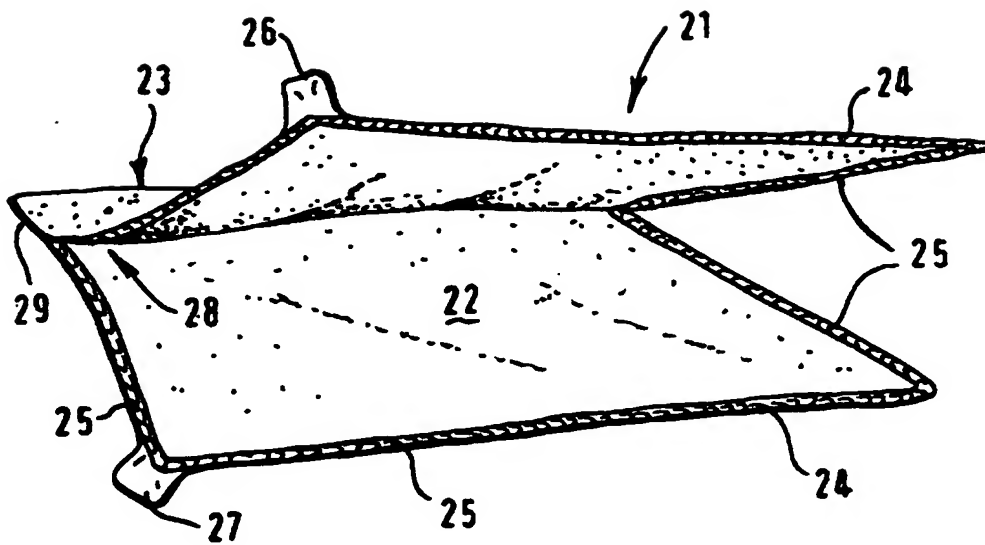
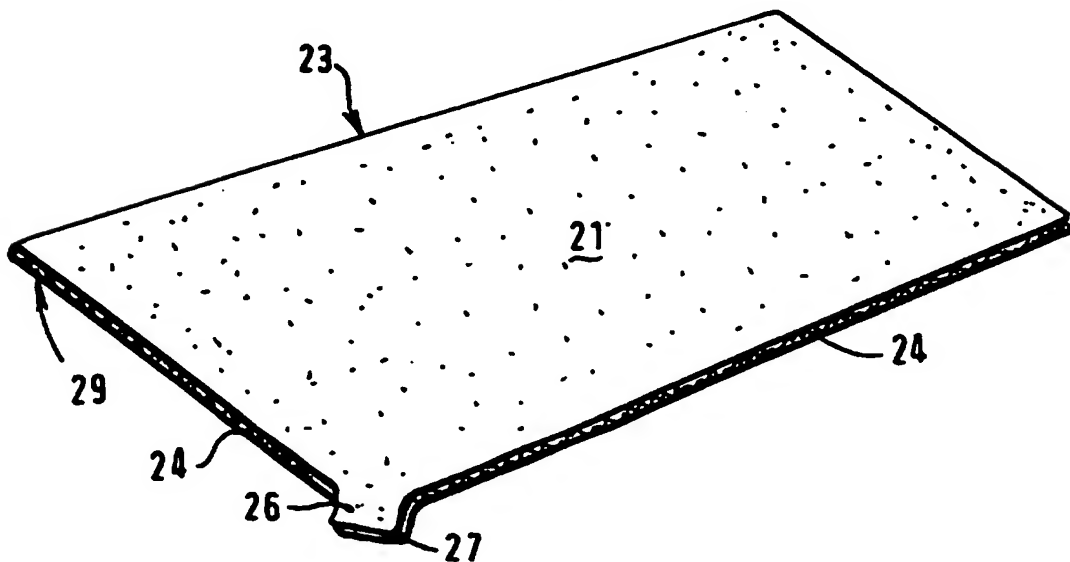


FIG.4



"PROTECTIVE ENVELOPES"

This invention relates to generally-planar protective envelopes, usually formed predominantly of woven or non-woven textile materials, which envelopes are adapted to encompass and thereby protect a correspondingly-shaped and dimensioned item removably inserted therewithin.

The protective envelopes of this invention can undoubtedly find suitable applications in various other contexts, but they have been developed above all as duvet covers, and their construction and advantages will be discussed below predominantly in relation to that context.

The use of duvets as a method of heat retention in many applications, but most usually in beds, is nowadays commonplace in the United Kingdom, and indeed goes back a very long time in other countries, perhaps even to ancient times. One must assume that the practice of covering duvets with removable duvet-covers is almost as old as the use of duvets themselves. There are obvious benefits in covering a duvet with a removable duvet-cover, and foremost amongst them must be for example the protection of the duvet itself from damage, and the ability to wash the cover so as to maintain hygiene without having also to wash the

duvet as well.

The covers used on duvets up until the present time have of course been provided with an opening, through which the duvet can be inserted or removed. It is believed however that the necessary opening has always hitherto been in the form of a single aperture located along one only of the edges of the duvet cover. This long-traditional arrangement however makes the insertion of the duvet into the cover via this single aperture a quite painstaking operation, with which anyone that has ever struggled to perform it will be familiar. To insert a duvet into a cover of this known type the bedmaker is driven to grasp the distal corners of the duvet and thereby thrust them deep within the cover. It is moreover necessary to achieve the correct alignment of the duvet within the cover, which is an operation that is often a good deal more difficult than it sounds. Even if insertion and alignment of the duvet within the cover does not go wrong (as quite often it does) at best this operation is very time-consuming.

It has to be remembered that access for the purposes of aligning the duvet is available only via the small aperture through which the duvet must be inserted; and that the insertion of a non-rigid, indeed limp and floppy, object

into an equally non-rigid and also floppy cover is always bound to be tiresome. And if the operation of changing a dirty duvet cover for a clean one is tiresome and time-consuming in the domestic environment, how much more so must it be in hotels or other institutional contexts where the staff must change large numbers of duvet covers day in and day out, sometimes even at daily intervals.

Faced with this long-standing, tiresome, time-wasting and in that sense costly problem, the aim of the present invention has been to find a way in which alignment of the duvet within the cover can be made easy by eliminating the previous difficulties due to restricted access, while ensuring that the closure of the duvet cover (and of course its opening too) can be effected with great simplicity.

It has now been recognised that a cover which can be opened substantially flat will allow the item which is to be covered to be easily and conveniently located in the correct position, prior to the closure or encompassing of the cover about the item. Conversely, of course the ease with which the item may be covered is also replicated when the item is removed from its cover.

The time and trouble thus saved in correctly locating

the item within the cover must not however be lost when fastening or unfastening the aperture. As those who use duvets well know, the apertures in known duvet covers must normally be closed up so as to prevent the duvet from escaping from the cover during normal use and the closure of the cover is effected by a series of fasteners, eg. button-and-buttonhole arrangements or press-studs. The larger the aperture, the more such fasteners will have to be undone before inserting the duvet, and done up again afterwards.

According to present invention, there is provided a generally-planar protective envelope, formed of flexible sheet material with adequate tensile strength to perform its function, which is adapted to encompass and thereby protect a correspondingly-shaped and dimensioned item removably inserted therewithin, said protective envelope comprising superposed top and bottom panels of substantially-coincident outline, both said panels sharing a common rectilinear peripheral boundary along which the respective panels are integral or integrated with each other, all the other coincident peripheral boundaries being substantially non-integral and non-integrated with each other but provided each of them on its side facing the other with respectively one part or the other of a two-part

hook-and-loop closure strip, such that the coincident other boundaries of the superposed textile panels may be detachably secured to each other via said closure strip thus enabling the protective envelope to be opened out substantially flat for insertion or replacement of the item in alignment with one of the panels, thereafter folded up with the other panel overlying the item and superposed over the panel with which the item is aligned, and finally closed up by and securing the edges of the coincident of the edges underlying and superposed panels via the closure strip, or vice versa.

The covers of this invention when used for covering duvets will generally be formed of textile-type materials, ie. either non-woven or preferably woven textile material, and they will of course also desirably be endowed with aesthetic qualities, e.g. of decorative or other appearance, feel or even smell.

The covers must have at least one substantially rectilinear edge about which they can be opened out or closed up, but their other boundaries are not necessarily rectilinear, and may be adapted to encompass and protect any particular article. The overall outline of the cover may thus for instance have a shape such as a semi-circle,



triangle, or indeed almost anything if there is a need for it. However, especially when used as duvet-covers on beds, the cover of this invention will generally and desirably have a substantially-rectangular outline.

A duvet cover should of course be of whatever size is suitable to encompass the duvets for which it is intended. Currently in the United Kingdom a single duvet cover would be approximately 6 feet long by 4 feet wide (say 1.8 or 2 m x 1.1 m) when closed around the duvet's rectangular outline.

Although in principle a protective envelope detachably joined at all of its common edges save one by the two-part hook-and-loop closure strip(s) can be readily opened up to insert or replace the article protected thereby, this in practice is not necessarily a simple task, especially if it is difficult to secure a firm grasp on parts of the cover which will facilitate the separation of the respective closure strips. It is therefore advantageous to provide means for facilitating separation of the hook-and-loop closure strip(s).

These separation-facilitating means will conveniently comprise two tabs, located one each on corresponding parts

of the removably-attached edges, provided on either one, but preferably both of the two superposed panels. Such separation - facilitating means may thus advantageously take the form of finger-grippable tabs secured to and extending from the aforesaid panels. They will and usually, though not necessarily always be located outside of the hook-and-loop closure strip(s). By pulling such tabs apart the top and bottom panels may be readily separated to open the cover out flat for insertion or replacement of the duvet, and thereafter quickly and easily be refastened.

The two tabs or other separation-facilitating means will most advantageously be positioned one each at or adjacent corresponding corners of both the upper and lower panels.

Although the item to be protected, eg. duvet, can be readily placed upon one of the panels of the cover when the latter is opened out flat, even then it does of course need to be properly positioned if the cover is to be readily closed up again. It is therefore beneficial to provide the cover with some kind of locating means whereby the item can be the more easily located in exactly the right position.

It is, therefore, a further preferred feature of the present invention, that the inner surface of one of the panels of the cover should be provided with at least one locating pocket into which part of the item can be introduced to ensure that at least adjacent parts and preferably all of the item will be properly positioned.

Such a locating pocket can be most conveniently created by omitting the two-part hook-and-loop closure strip along a relatively-short length of one of the other boundaries adjacent the common rectilinear boundary and instead permanently integrating the two boundaries together, eg. by sewing. In this way one easily creates a pocket that is basically a right-angled triangle in outline, into which one of the corners of the duvet or other item can be tucked so as thereby facilitating the alignment of the item prior to closure of the cover.

In order that the invention may be better understood it will now be described in more detail, but only by way of illustration, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

**Figure 1** is an opened-out plan view of one preferred embodiment of duvet-cover in accordance with the present

invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the same embodiment of duvet-cover as shown in Figure 1, but now in folded-up condition;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of another preferred embodiment of duvet-cover in accordance with this invention, in this case in a partially-open condition; and

Figure 4 is a similar perspective view of the same embodiment of duvet cover as in Figure 3, but now in is a fully-closed condition.

Referring first to Figures 1 and 2 of the drawings, it will be seen that the protective envelope comprises a top panel 1 and a bottom panel 2, which have a common rectilinear-boundary 3. This common rectilinear boundary can be formed by the permanent integration of two separate boundaries, as e.g. by sewing - but conveniently (and as actually shown here) the common rectilinear boundary 3 shared by panels 1 and 2 is formed merely as an integral fold in a larger sheet which comprises both the top panel 1 and the bottom panel 2.

When the two superposable panels 1 and 2 are folded together and thus brought into superposed conjunction, as shown in Figure 2, the other three pairs of common peripheral boundaries, thus 4a and 4b, 5a and 5b and 6a and 6b come together. The facing, inner surfaces of all these boundaries are each provided with one part or the other of a two-part hook-and-loop closure strip.

When the respective parts of said closure strip are brought together; the part of the strip on the top panel 7 engages with its counterpart on the bottom panel 8, thereby securing them together. Once the envelope has been thus closed, the item is encompassed within the space generally indicated 9, and protected by the cover thus formed.

Turning now to the alternative preferred embodiment of Figures 3 and 4, it will be seen that the duvet-cover has an upper panel 21 and a lower panel 22, permanently integrated along a common rectilinear boundary 23, as well as an hook-and-loop closure strip 24, the respective parts of which are disposed along and adjacent to each of the other common peripheral boundaries 25.

A tab 26 is located on the upper panel 21 and a similar tap 27 is located on the lower panel 22, but in

each case outside of the closure strip 24. These tabs 26 and 27 may be grasped and pulled apart in order to facilitate convenient opening of the hook-and-loop closure strip.

In addition, a locating pocket 28 is formed adjacent to common rectilinear boundary 23 by omitting the hook-and-loop closure strip 24 along a short length of the boundary 29, and instead over this length the two panels 21 and 22 are permanently-integrated together at this point, eg. by sewing.

CLAIMS

1. A generally-planar protective envelope formed of flexible sheet material with adequate tensile strength to perform its function, which is adapted to encompass and thereby protect a correspondingly-shaped and dimensioned item removably inserted therewithin, said protective envelope comprising superposed top and bottom panels of substantially-coincident outline, both said panels sharing a common rectilinear peripheral boundary along which the respective panels are integral or integrated with each other, all the other coincident peripheral boundaries being substantially non-integral and non-integrated with each other but provided each of them on its side facing the other with respectively one part or the other of a two-part hook-and-loop closure strip, such that the coincident other boundaries of the superposed textile panels may be detachably secured to each other via said closure strip thus enabling the protective envelope to be opened out substantially flat for insertion or replacement of the item in alignment with one of the panels, and thereafter folded up with the other panel overlying the item and superposed over the panel with which the item is aligned, and finally closed up by securing the edges of the coincident edges of the underlying panels via the closure strip, or vice

versa.

2. A protective envelope as claimed in claim 1, for use as a duvet-cover in which the superposed panels are formed of textile material and the envelope as a whole has integral and non-integral boundaries that are generally-rectangular in outline.

3. A protective envelope as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, in which manipulable means are provided on each of the panels at or adjacent the at least one of the non-integral, coincident boundaries thereof, and at a point remote from the rectilinear boundary aforesaid, which manipulable means facilitate separation of the hook-and-loop closure strip(s).

4. A protective envelope as claimed in claims 2 and 3, in which the manipulable means are provided at or adjacent at least one of the corners of the rectangular panels remote from the rectilinear boundary aforesaid.

5. A protective envelope as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4, in which the manipulable means comprise two finger-grippable tabs, each of them secured to and extending from one of the respective panels, which tabs may be manually



pulled apart to effect separation of the hook-and-loop closure strip(s).

6. A protective envelope as claimed in any of the preceding claims, in which the two superposed panels are formed from a single larger sheet, and the common, rectilinear peripheral-boundary comprises a fold in the larger sheet such that the top and bottom panels thus formed have coincident other boundaries.

7. A protective envelope as claimed in any of the preceding claims, which is provided with a pocket for locating a corresponding portion of the item to be protected, so as thereby to facilitate the correct alignment of the protective envelope with the item to be protected thereby before the hook-and-loop closure strip is made effective.

8. A protective envelope as claimed in claim 7 insofar as dependent directly or indirectly upon claim 2, in which the pocket is in outline a right-angled triangle at one of the corners of the rectangular envelope.

9. A protective envelope as claimed in claim 8, in which the triangular locating pocket is formed at one corner

adjacent the rectilinear boundary aforesaid.

10. A protective envelope as claimed in claim 9, in which the pocket is formed by omitting a relatively-short length of the hook-and-loop closure strip adjacent the rectilinear boundary and instead integrating the two coincident boundaries together.

11. A protective envelope as claimed in any of the preceding claims, so shaped and dimensioned as to form a duvet-cover for protecting a duvet.

12. A protective envelope as claimed in any of the preceding claims and substantially as herein described.

13. A generally-planar protective envelope formed predominantly of woven or non-woven textile material which is adapted to encompass and thereby protect a correspondingly shaped and dimensioned item when inserted therein, substantially as herein described and shown in the accompanying drawings.

14. A duvet-cover substantially as herein described and shown in Figures 1 and 2 and/or Figures 3 and 4 of the accompanying drawings.

15. A kit of parts comprising a duvet-cover as claimed in any of the preceding claims together with a duvet.

16. A duvet and duvet-cover, as claimed in claim 15 and substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings and as shown therein.



Application No: GB 9701764.4  
Claims searched: 1-16

Examiner: D. Haworth  
Date of search: 3 June 1998

**Patents Act 1977**  
**Search Report under Section 17**

**Databases searched:**

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.P): A4S (S12); A4G (G10)

Int Cl (Ed.6): A47G 9/02, 9/04, 9/08

Other: Online: WPI

**Documents considered to be relevant:**

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X,E	GB 2318051 A (Morgan)	1,2 and 6-16
A	GB 2312164 A (Allsopp)	
A	GB 1013052 A (Slater)	

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step  
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